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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 6 August 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. WEISSBRODT

later: Mr. OGURTSOV
(Vice-Chairperson)

CONTENTS

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII) (continued)

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII) (item 2 of the provisional agenda) (continued)

1. The CHAIRPERSON referred the members of the Sub-Commission to the draft resolution on recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which had not, as yet, become an official document but the text of which was available.

2. After a procedural discussion, in which Mr. GUISSÉ, Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ and Mr. PINHEIRO took part, it was agreed that the document, as it currently stood, should not be distributed to persons other than the members of the Sub-Commission and that Ms. Hampson should read out the current text that the Sub-Commission was considering.

3. Ms. HAMPSON read out the following text of the draft resolution:

"Recognition of responsibility and reparation for massive and flagrant violations of human rights which constitute crimes against humanity and which took place during the period of slavery and colonialism.

The Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights,

Referring to its Decision 2000/114 and drawing the attention of the international community to the cases of massive and flagrant violations of human rights which must be considered as crimes against humanity and which have, to date, benefited from impunity, in spite of the tragic suffering which slavery and colonialism have inflicted on numerous peoples in the world,

Considering that it is not possible to combat racism and racial discrimination, struggle against impunity and denounce the human rights violations which persist in the world without taking account of the deep wounds of the past,

Considering that, in the framework of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, it is necessary that the international community should consider the causes and consequences of those ills which, historically, have been brought about by slavery and colonialism,

Considering also that the historic responsibility of the relevant powers towards the peoples whom they colonized or reduced to slavery should be the subject of solemn and formal recognition and reparation,

Recalling that this responsibility is all the more well-founded since the periods of slavery and colonialism have brought about a state of economic collapse in the countries concerned, serious consequences in the social fabric and other tragedies which continue even today to affect entire peoples throughout the world,

Considering that the solemn and formal recognition of this historic responsibility towards the peoples affected should include a concrete and material aspect such as rehabilitation of the dignity of the peoples affected, active cooperation in development not confined to existing measures of development assistance, debt cancellation, the payment of the Tobin tax, technology transfers for the benefit of the peoples concerned and the progressive restoration of cultural objects accompanied by the means to ensure their effective protection,

Considering that it is essential that the implementation of reparations should effectively benefit peoples, notably their most disadvantaged groups, with special attention being paid to the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights,

Convinced that such recognition and reparation will constitute the beginning of a process that will foster the institution of an indispensable dialogue between peoples whom history has put in conflict for the achievement of a world of understanding, tolerance and peace,

1. Requests all the countries concerned to take initiatives which would assist, notably through debate and the provision of accurate information, in the raising of public awareness of the disastrous consequences of periods of slavery and colonialism;

2. Requests that a process of reflection be initiated in a concerted fashion, on the appropriate procedures which would enable the guarantee of the implementation of the present proposals;

3. Decides to continue its consideration of the question at its fifty-fourth session."

4. She informed the participants that the English version was an unofficial translation of the original French text of the draft resolution.

5. Mr. EIDE said that he would prefer to retain the phrase "wars of conquest", which had been listed together with slavery and the colonial period in the title and the first and third preambular paragraphs of the original version of the text but was otherwise in agreement with the text as it stood.

6. Mrs. WARZAZI said that the intention had been to keep the text as simple as possible so that it would be acceptable to the Sub-Commission as a whole, thus enabling all the members to become sponsors of the draft resolution and, consequently, to adopt it unanimously.

7. Mr. JOINET said that, while he was not in agreement with everything in the text of the draft resolution, he had preferred not to introduce changes on the assumption that it would be

adopted by consensus. However, like Mr. Eide, he was in favour of retaining the words "wars of conquest" and also wished to introduce the word "largely" in the third preambular paragraph between the words "have been brought about" and "by slavery and colonialism".

8. Ms. HAMPSON, supported by Mrs. WARZAZI, said that the intention was to try and adopt the draft resolution unanimously, which would have a stronger impact than merely adopting it by consensus. She therefore thought that Mr. Joinet's suggestions should be incorporated so that he would be able to join the rest of the Sub-Commission in sponsoring the document.

9. The CHAIRPERSON asked the persons who wished to sponsor the draft resolution to raise their hands and observed that all the members of the Sub-Commission present, with the exception of Mr. Joinet, had done so. He recalled that, over the years, the Sub-Commission had done its utmost to adopt decisions unanimously; however, the rules merely stated that the Sub-Commission could adopt decisions without a vote and that was how the secretariat recorded such decisions, even if they were adopted unanimously. Lastly, he recalled that the resolution would be presented to the Preparatory Committee by Mr. Pinheiro, the Sub-Commission's representative to that body.

10. Mrs. WARZAZI said that it was most important that the secretariat should record unanimous decisions as such, and not merely as consensual decisions.

11. Mr. KARTASHKIN asked whether the Chairperson favoured adoption of the draft resolution by consensus or unanimously.

12. The CHAIRPERSON said that it was the practice of the Sub-Commission that the presiding officer did not take a position on such issues but remained neutral.

13. Mr. JOINET, referring to the third preambular paragraph, said it would be better to refer to ills brought about "largely" by slavery, colonialism and wars of conquest, since there were other causes of such ills, notably religious wars. In the sixth preambular paragraph, "peoples concerned" should replace "peoples affected" in the second line, and in the French text the words "de la taxe Tobin" should be substituted for the words "du taxe Tobin". In the French text of the last preambular paragraph, he would prefer the stronger wording "*Exprime* sa conviction" to the word "*Persuadée*". Paragraph 1, first and second lines, should read "... sur la base d'informations conformes à la vérité" ("... on the basis of accurate information").

14. He had already expressed his view that the text should take the form of a declaration, which would be more serious and would have a wider impact.

15. If his suggestions were adopted, he would probably be in a position to support a unanimous decision without a vote.

16. Mr. FAN GUOXIANG said he had no objection to the text as it stood, with some minor technical changes. He would be glad if such an important resolution could be adopted, whether unanimously or by consensus. However, he pointed out that further efforts were needed to achieve progress, since the question could not be solved overnight.

17. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether Mr. Guissé, as one of the main sponsors, was able to accept the amendments proposed by Mr. Joinet.

18. Mr. GUISSÉ said that Mr. Joinet had participated in the drafting of the text and could have put forward his proposals at an earlier stage. He himself did not think it would be appropriate to include any reference to religious wars.

19. Mr. JOINET said he had not in fact proposed the inclusion of such a reference.

20. Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ said he was very concerned that so many changes were being proposed at such a late stage when agreement had already been reached on the text following extensive consultations. He did not think it was proper for a single member of the Sub-Commission to assume the role of arbiter on the formulation of the text.

21. Mrs. WARZAZI appealed to the members of the Sub-Commission to show a spirit of solidarity and to arrive at a consensus on the draft resolution.

22. Ms. HAMPSON urged the Sub-Commission to avoid as far as possible the use of the word "consensus". It should try to ensure that it was able to adopt the draft resolution, either on the basis of general sponsorship or by a vote by a show of hands. She herself had no problem with any of the changes suggested by Mr. Joinet.

23. Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ, referring to the French text, said he would like to know the difference between "fidèles à la vérité" and "conformes à la vérité" in paragraph 1, and why Mr. Joinet was proposing that one formulation be adopted when the sponsors had already approved another.

24. Mr. JOINET said there was, in fact, no difference between the two formulations: he had proposed the amendment purely on stylistic grounds, and would be willing to withdraw it if necessary. It had been repeatedly stressed in the working group that the objective was to adopt the text by consensus: the situation was different if the objective was to be to adopt the text unanimously.

25. Subject to the Sub-Commission's acceptance of his only amendment of substance, namely, the addition of "and wars of conquest" after "colonialism" in the first preambular paragraph, he was prepared to make the transition from adoption by consensus to unanimous adoption.

26. The CHAIRPERSON said that Mr. Ogurtsov, Mr. Yimer and Mr. Bengoa wished to become sponsors of the draft resolution.

27. He took it that it was the wish of the Sub-Commission to accept Mr. Joinet's substantive amendment and to adopt the draft resolution, as amended, unanimously.

28. It was so decided.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (item 3 of the provisional agenda) (continued) (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/6 and 8 and Corr.1; E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/NGO/5, 9 and 16; E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/44; E/CN.4/2001/59 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

29. Mr. MASOOD (International Human Rights Association of American Minorities) said that there was growing acceptance of universal jurisdiction in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which had already been ratified by at least 30 States. As stated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, human rights abuses such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture were widely considered to be subject to universal jurisdiction. An International Criminal Court exercising universal jurisdiction would make it possible to prosecute political and military figures who were responsible for systematic violations of basic human rights in situations of conflict and occupation, for example in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and in Palestine. National sovereignty could no longer serve as a guarantee of impunity. He noted, however, that some countries were reluctant to accede to the Rome Statute and were pressing for amendments to its provisions.

30. Ms. BANDETTINI di POGGIO (International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples) said that the state of emergency declared in Israel in 1948 had been repeatedly extended and was still in force. The Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observations on Israel's initial report, had recommended that the Government take steps to limit the scope and territorial applicability of the state of emergency and the associated derogation of rights. In the current conflict, the powerful Israeli armed forces and intelligence services were pitted against a civilian population that had been dispossessed of its rights and was fighting for survival with every means at its disposal. The question arose whether Israel, as the occupying Power, was justified in applying the state of emergency to the occupied territories. It was rather required, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, to protect the civilian population of the territories.

31. The state of emergency was invoked for the purpose of sealing off the occupied territories and erecting roadblocks. Pregnant women spent hours waiting at checkpoints in the blistering heat; one woman had died some weeks previously within sight of a Red Crescent mobile unit that was waiting on the other side of the checkpoint. Patients with chronic heart conditions had also died owing to lack of treatment. Red Crescent ambulances were often denied passage and exposed to gunfire in violation of the principle of neutrality of medical services. Such behaviour by the occupying Power was contrary to articles 16, 17, 18, 21 and 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

32. Seven civilians had been killed some days previously in a "targeted" attack against alleged "criminals". As Ms. Hampson had noted, there were judicial procedures for bringing suspects to justice. Israel's so-called "active defence" policy posed a serious threat to the civilian population. Official killings had become such a routine event that people were becoming inured to their tragic implications. Mrs. Warzazi had drawn attention to the complicity of silence of powerful States, the use of the veto and attempts to muzzle those who spoke out against such practices.

33. Her organization urged the Sub-Commission, as an independent body, to bring a new sense of urgency to the debate with a view to ending the tragedy.

34. Ms. CHIN (Pax Romana) said that, in Japan, 17 different types of homicide were punishable by the death penalty. The distress suffered by persons sentenced to death was compounded by the fact that they were not informed of the date of their execution. Most of the 110 people currently under sentence of death had been awaiting execution for many years. Moreover, families were only informed of the execution of a relative after the event. Executioners also suffered considerable trauma and were denied proper psychological care. The Prison Law had not been amended since 1907. Her organization urged the Sub-Commission to continue its work on capital punishment, examining the question of psychological abuse of both prisoners and executioners, and to urge all countries that had not yet done so, including Japan, to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

35. The Internal Security Act in Malaysia was used to detain individuals without trial. It had been enacted in 1960 to fight communist insurgents but had since become obsolete. A High Court judge, ruling on a recent case of unlawful detention, had urged Parliament to review the Act. A demonstration in support of six activists detained under the Act had been forcibly dispersed on 15 July 2001, 41 persons being arrested and charged with illegal assembly. There had also been reports of police brutality and acts of torture. According to the Government itself, 387 people had been killed in prison between October 1994 and October 1999.

36. The 1984 Printing Presses and Publications Act was used systematically by the Malaysian Government to muzzle the media. She referred in particular to a controversial takeover of two independent Chinese-language newspapers for alleged incitement of the Chinese community against the Government in a report on a by-election.

37. Her organization urged the Sub-Commission to call on the Government of Malaysia to ratify the United Nations human rights treaties which it had not yet ratified, especially the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

38. Mr. EGIDE (Pax Romana) said that a lawful and orderly approach should be adopted to the process of redressing the socio-economic imbalances created by colonial history in Zimbabwe, especially land reform. An issue of great concern was the loss of independence of the judiciary. A number of High Court judges, whose rulings had been ignored by government officials, had been harassed and forced to resign. A general amnesty had been granted for politically motivated crimes committed during the year 2000, encouraging impunity and the development of a culture of violence. Crimes committed by ruling party loyalists were ignored. In addition, freedom of expression was undermined by the expulsion of foreign journalists and harassment of local journalists who reported the Government's violations of human rights.

39. His organization welcomed the Sub-Commission's stand on the issue of recognition of past wrongs and reparations and urged the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference to take expedient corresponding action.

40. Mr. SAFI (International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations) said that, according to Amnesty International, a large number of "disappearances" documented in its 1993 report on

Jammu and Kashmir remained unresolved and the factors that had facilitated such disappearances were still in place. The recent discovery of a mass grave in a former army camp highlighted the urgency of the situation.

41. Referring to a horrific description of the Srebrenica massacre by a judge of the International Criminal Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia, he suggested that the Sub-Commission's working group on the administration of justice should include an item entitled "administration of justice in conflict areas" in its agenda. He echoed Ms. Hampson's admonition that situations of ongoing conflict were ripe territory for serious human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions and disappearances. The Sub-Commission had a particular responsibility to speak out in such situations.

42. Ms. ZERROUGI said that the working group on the administration of justice had asked her to prepare a working document on "discrimination in the criminal justice system". At least two studies on aspects of discrimination in the administration of justice had already been carried out by the Sub-Commission, one by Mr. Abu Rannat in 1967 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1967/296) and the other by Mr. Chowdhury in 1982 (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1982/7).

43. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regularly reported cases of discrimination in criminal justice and the administration of justice. The reports of human rights treaty bodies and of the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and the working documents for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance attested to the scale of the phenomenon throughout the world. Discrimination was common in courts, police stations, prisons and other places of detention and was directed mainly at vulnerable social groups, who were also frequently overrepresented in prisons and among the victims of human rights violations. They suffered discrimination on account of their foreign origin, gender, ethnic or religious background, age, disability, sexual orientation or poverty and, in many cases, on several grounds at once.

44. Discrimination was frequently institutionalized in legislation, rules of procedure, criminal policy and the organization and running of the police, the justice system and prisons. According to the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of torture, victims of discrimination also ran the greatest risk of being tortured and subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment in police stations, prisons and places of detention.

45. Vulnerable or deprived groups often suffered discrimination in terms of access to justice, legal assistance and, in the case of offenders, the right to social reintegration. Considerable resources were needed to ensure equality of treatment before the law and the lack of such resources led to flagrant disparities in the justice system and to corruption, especially in the prisons.

46. Women were the most vulnerable group. They tended to be underrepresented in the administration of justice and were, in some cases, denied access to certain offices. Their needs were not taken into account in criminal policy and they suffered on account of their weak social

status. Foreigners were also particularly vulnerable and their plight was deteriorating with the development of inter-State police and judicial cooperation, especially in the form of bilateral or regional agreements, often based on national preference.

47. She hoped that the World Conference would spell out the kind of action that should be taken to ensure effective protection for all vulnerable persons from de facto and de jure discriminatory practices.

48. Mr. EIDE said that discrimination in criminal justice was an extremely important subject and he was pleased to note that it had been placed on the agenda of the working group on the administration of justice.

49. Ms. MOTOC said she fully agreed with those speakers who had emphasized the importance of discrimination in the administration of justice. That issue should be taken up not only by the working group, but also by the full Sub-Commission.

50. The issue of justice in situations of transition had so far been only partially dealt with by the Sub-Commission. From the 1980s onwards, a number of States in Eastern Europe had been making the transition from an old regime to a new one, and were faced with problems as to how to establish the truth concerning the massive human rights violations that had occurred in the past. Following the same transition in Latin America, countries such as Argentina and Chile had set up committees to increase awareness of the crimes of the past and to bring about reconciliation. Subsequently, a number of African States had also established "truth and reconciliation" committees, the most celebrated being that of South Africa.

51. A number of problems arose in relation to justice in situations of transition. If truth and reconciliation committees could grant amnesty to those guilty of human rights violations, were such amnesties to be seen as supplementary to or as an alternative to judicial proceedings? Other problems concerned the composition of such committees, their procedures for interrogating witnesses and receiving depositions, and whether their reports should be made public. It was essential, in the case of regimes which had been involved in serious ethnic and racial conflicts, to try to establish general principles governing the operation of such committees.

52. Mr. Ogurtsov, Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

53. Mrs. DAES said she fully endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 43 of the working paper prepared by Ms. Zerrougui that a study on discrimination in the criminal justice system should be undertaken by a member of the Sub-Commission. Reliable reports indicated that the non-discrimination rule of the Standard Minimum Rules was not being applied to indigenous peoples in a number of countries. For instance, indigenous peoples frequently suffered ill-treatment during detention, and were often brought before the courts without being provided with interpretation and found guilty without knowing what crimes they were charged with.

54. Mr. EIDE said that the issues raised by Mrs. Daes were extremely important ones. Indigenous peoples often experienced particular problems in connection with the administration of justice, particularly when they were arrested or held in custody. He agreed that a full study on the topic should be carried out.

55. Mr. SHARIF (International Institute for Peace) said that the elected prime minister of Pakistan had become the victim of a military coup d'etat for attempting to save the South Asian region from the threat of nuclear war. The people of Pakistan had lost all faith in the democratic process after the fourth coup in 50 years. The military Government had begun to replace the existing model of democracy with institutions of its own design. He expressed solidarity with all the peoples in the world whose rights to self-determination and a democratic Government were being denied, and urged the international community to step up its efforts to put an end to tyranny for the sake of future generations.

56. Mr. ANDREU GUZMAN (International Commission of Jurists) said that his organization welcomed the decision by the working group on the administration of justice to make a study of the administration of justice by military courts. The facts showed that trials before military courts frequently led to injustices, the denial of basic rights and impunity. The study should address the following issues: the extent to which the right to a fair and impartial judgement and procedural guarantees prevailed in military courts; the trial of civilians by military courts; the trial by military courts of military and police officers for offences constituting human rights violations, and the question of military courts and conscientious objectors. The study should also identify the principles governing the competence, structure and functioning of military courts, taking into account their compatibility with international human rights law.

57. There was an abundant jurisprudence concerning military courts, including a report produced in 1969 by a Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission (E/CN.4/Sub.2/296), in which he concluded that it was debatable whether a military judge could be truly impartial, given that he was dependent on his superiors for his future career development. The trial of civilians by military courts had been found inconsistent with the right to a fair trial by both the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Human Rights Committee took the view that the practice violated the guarantees provided by article 14 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and had issued a recommendation to Governments to prevent civilians from appearing before military courts.

58. There was still a need, however, for the jurisprudence on the issue to be properly systematized and disseminated. The administration of justice by military courts was an issue of crucial importance in guaranteeing the rule of law. His organization was working on a report concerning military courts, which would be completed by the end of 2001.

59. Mr. LITTMAN (Association for World Education) said that a specific case of arbitrary detention, that of Dr. Neseem Abdel Malek, clearly illustrated the injustice of legislation enforced in Egypt for the past 20 years, during what was described as a state of emergency. In May 2000, a further three-year extension had been applied to legislation providing for any civilian to be referred automatically to a military court by a presidential decision if the alleged crime was defined broadly as "an act of terrorism". In Opinion 10/1999 (E/CN.4/2000/4/Add.1), the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had requested the Government of Egypt to review the case of Dr. Malek, a Coptic Christian, who had been condemned by a military court to 25 years' imprisonment without right of appeal. The prosecution had been based on allegations of bribery

made by a certified insane killer and Islamist terrorist, who had dedicated his life to a jihad against infidels. The Government of Egypt had responded to the pressure by reducing the doctor's sentence, for unspecified reasons, from 25 to 10 years.

60. His organization was calling for an immediate presidential pardon to be granted to Dr. Malek, on the grounds that he had not had a fair trial, and that bribery charges usually carried no more than a three-year prison sentence. He appealed to the German Government, nine of whose citizens had been brutally murdered in connection with the case, as well as to the members of the Sub-Commission, to add their voices to the plea for a presidential pardon.

61. Mr. KIM Yong Ho (Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation appreciated the efforts of the Sub-Commission to draw attention to the mass and flagrant violations of human rights that had taken place during the colonial period or in connection with wars of conquest and slavery. Colonialism and slavery were the root causes of continuing human rights violations, including those related to racial discrimination. Without the judgement and punishment of crimes against humanity committed in the past, it would be impossible to prevent the same crimes occurring in the future. Nevertheless, some countries continued to deny their criminal history by refusing to acknowledge legal and moral responsibility, distorting the teaching of historical events and refusing to provide compensation for the victims.

62. More than 200,000 Korean women had been used as military sex slaves, 6 million people had been used as forced labour, and 1 million innocent people had been massacred during 40 years of colonial rule. He urged Japan to accept responsibility for its actions, provide compensation and make an official apology.

63. The CHAIRPERSON said that the statement by the observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had not been strictly connected with the administration of justice. He urged speakers to confine themselves to matters related to the agenda item under consideration.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

64. Mr. HAMZAH (Observer for Malaysia), speaking in response to a joint statement by Liberation and the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace and a statement by Pax Romana, said that his Government had introduced the Internal Security Act in order to preserve security and economic development in the face of subversive forces. His delegation had already made a statement in exercise of the right of reply on the same subject under agenda item 2, so he would not repeat the reasons for the detention of activists.

65. The Internal Security Act continued to be a useful instrument in a society in which extremist activities were widespread, and the Government had to take steps to protect its citizens. Any arrests were made on the basis of full police investigations and prisoners were neither tortured nor denied access to legal counsel. Malaysians were fully entitled to the freedoms of expression and assembly, provided that such activities took place in accordance with the law.

66. There was nothing controversial about the newspaper takeovers referred to by Pax Romana, which were motivated purely by commercial considerations. Lastly, his delegation rejected some of the figures mentioned by Pax Romana, which had not come from an authoritative source.

67. Mr. SHEN Yongxiang (Observer for China), speaking in response to a statement by International Educational Development Inc., said that the Falun Gong had caused the deaths of over 1,600 people, and led to the breakdown of numerous families, by its preaching of a pending doomsday. Any responsible Government had an obligation to prohibit organizations which constituted a threat to life and society. His Government had adopted a method of education and persuasion for most Falun Gong members, and had dealt with the dissenting minority in accordance with the law.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.